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THESIS



COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THE
PHILIPPINES

by

Jacinto C. Ligot

June, 1994

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Communist Insurgency In The Philippines

by

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Colonel, Philippine Army

B.S. Philippine Military Academy, 1970

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of the requirements for the degree of

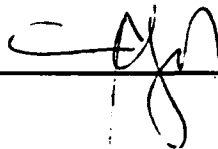
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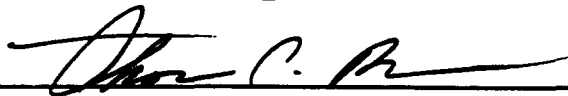
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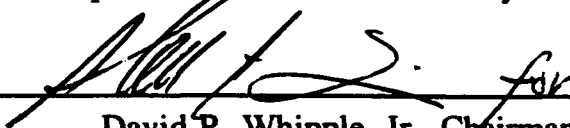
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ABSTRACT

In the post Cold War and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the communist insurgents in the Philipines are still a potent force and the main threat to the county's national security.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the issues that brought about the resurgence of the communist insurgency and the counterinsurgency measures undertaken by the government.

Economic disparity and injustice are major reasons for people to take up arms against the govenment. Unless these are resolved the insurgency problem will continue to persist. A purely military solution to the problem will not solve the communist insurgency in the Philippines.

While the CPP is the most potent threat to the security of the Republic of the Philippines, it is not yet in a position to win militarily against the Armed Forces of the Philippines. In the same manner, the Armed Forces of the Philippines could not totally defeat the insurgents for as long as the basic issues that attract or draw the people to the communist movement are not addressed by the government.

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Abbreviations

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
CPP-NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army
FMLN	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MPABA	Malayan People's Anti-British Army
MRLA	Malayan Races Liberation Army
PKP	Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Communist Party of the Philippines)

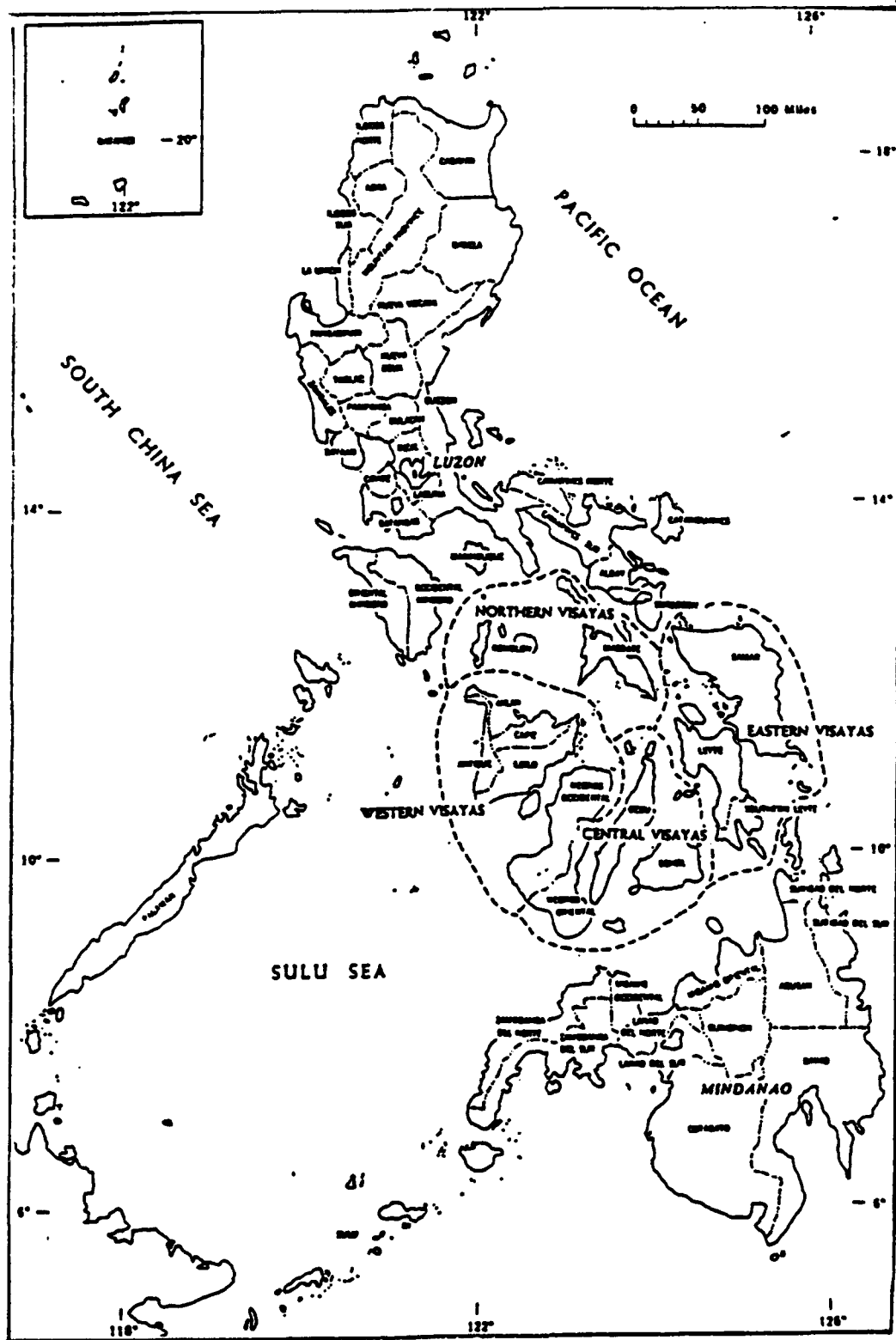


Figure 1: Map of the Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, among the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is the only remaining country beset by the communist insurgency problem. Faced with a Moscow-oriented Communist movement in the early years of the Republic in the late 1940s, the government had to channel much needed funds intended for economic recovery to the elimination of the insurgency problem. This was effectively dealt with in the middle 1950s during the time of President Elpidio Quirino and Secretary of National Defense Ramon Magsaysay. In the late 1960s, however, there was a resurgence of the communist insurgency problem, this time oriented on the Maoist line. For the last 25 years, the government had been fighting the communist insurgents, so many lives and resources had been sacrificed and wasted but the solution to the problem is not in sight. After the post Cold War and the collapse of communism, the communist insurgents in the Philippines are still a potent force and a main threat to the country's national security.

The primary concern of the research is to discuss the issues that brought about the resurgence of the communist insurgency in the Philippines in the 1960s, its strategy to overthrow the government and the strategy of the government to

resolve the problem. In the analysis of the government's counterinsurgency program, this study will try to make comparative analyses with counterinsurgency programs implemented in selected countries in order to assess the effectiveness of the government's approach in solving the insurgency problem.

In order to provide the readers a thorough understanding of the problem, a historical perspective of events and conditions is discussed in Chapter II. In Chapter III, I discussed the strategy of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) and in Chapter IV, I discussed the government's response to the insurgency. The counterinsurgency efforts by other selected countries and comparative analysis are presented in Chapter V. Based on the counterinsurgency scenarios analyzed in Chapters IV and V, I draw conclusions on the future of the insurgency in the Philippines.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE INSURGENCY PROBLEM

The history of the Filipino people is replete with examples of struggle from economic bondage and struggle for freedom and liberty be it during the Spanish, American and Japanese regimes. While the first Philippine Revolution in 1896 was a struggle for independence from the Spanish colonizers, it was also a fight about land and the prevailing socio-economic structure. The Philippine Revolution was won, but only to be crushed by another mighty power that has offered education, enjoyment of political rights, and a government run by Filipinos under American tutelage. In his Readings on Counterinsurgency, Alexander Aguirre noted that, "compared to the Spanish Era, the political reforms made by the Americans were many and substantial, however, this did not materially alter the economic status of the masses. The Filipinos are still poor and landless."¹

A. THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD (1521-1898)

Even before the Spaniards came to the Philippines, the Filipinos had practiced self-government. They had a political and social organization known as the barangay or village which

¹Alexander Aguirre, Readings on Counterinsurgency, Fineprint, Inc. Quezon City, 1987, p. 99.

usually consisted of 30 to 100 families. The barangay was headed by a datu, a member of the nobility. He was assisted by the maharlikas or the freemen who led the barangay warriors, advised the datu and collected taxes. The other classes of people were the timawas or the serfs and the alipins or the slaves. In the colonial administration of the islands, the Spaniards built on this traditional village organization, thereby co-opting and confirming the status of the traditional leaders over their followers and dependents. The system of indirect rule helped create the Filipino upper class, the principales.²

Discovered by Ferdinand Magellan, on March 16, 1521, the group of islands which later became known as the Philippines was colonized and Christianized by Spain for almost four hundred years. Religious orders came to the country and acquired large tracts of land.

Insurgency in the Philippines had its roots during the Spanish rule when the encomienda system was established in 1570. The encomienda system was an arrangement for collecting tribute from a group of native Filipinos placed under the encomendero who had the responsibility to provide temporal and spiritual welfare to the people in his encomienda. The

²John Leddy Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines, University of Wisconsin Press, Milwaukee, 1967, pp. 7-26. Also see Teodoro Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso, History of the Filipino People, Malaya Books, Quezon City, 1957, pp. 41 & 46.

Spaniards found it easy to apply this system in the Philippines because of the existing class lines among the people. The encomienda, however, developed into a system of exploitation when the encomenderos required the Filipinos to pay more than what was required of them by law. Filipinos who could not pay the amount demanded by the encomendero were subjected to torture and punishment and driven away from their land, the source of their livelihood. High taxes coupled with abuses lead to widespread discontent among the people. Such a feudal setup led to the widening of the gap between the ruling class and the people. The abolition of the encomienda system in the 17th century did not improve the situation. The friars expanded their estate with the Filipinos continuing as workers and tenants. The life of the peasant during the Spanish period was characterized by the absolute poverty and humiliation. The peasant received one half of the harvested crops while he, furnished the tools and work animals. On top of this, as his earning was not enough to feed his family for the whole year, he was compelled to borrow money from his landlord at exorbitant interest. The result was the peasant became heavily indebted to the landlord.³ The present hacienda system evolved from the encomienda system. The owners of the haciendas are heirs of the old elites who maintained the

³Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso, History of the Filipino People, Malaya Books, Quezon City, 1957, pp. 108 and 525-526.

ownership of the land.

In 1896, in the spirit of nationalism and as a protest to the abuse of the colonizers, Filipinos revolted against Spain. The revolution in 1896 proved to be the unifying event that brought about national consciousness among the Filipinos. Briefly the Filipinos experienced freedom when on June 12, 1898, Emilio Aguinaldo, proclaimed the independence of the Philippines.⁴

B. THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PERIOD (1898-1946)

The freedom of the Filipinos was cut short with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 which caused the cession of the Philippines to the United States. The Philippine-American War followed and culminated with the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo at Palanan, Isabela on March 23, 1901. The Philippines once again became a colony of a powerful nation, the United States.⁵

From the start, the American colonial mission was in terms of tutelage, a process of preparing the Philippines for eventual independence. The Americans established a civil government in 1901 and started to prepare the Filipinos toward self-government. During the year, the Americans entrusted the management of the municipal government to the Filipinos and in

⁴Ibid. p. 240-241.

⁵Ibid. pp. 257-259 & 269.

1902, the provincial government. In 1907, members of the first Philippine Assembly, composed of Filipinos, were elected. Issues of independence and autonomy dominated the concerns of the Assembly.⁶

The Americans introduced the free enterprise system and equal opportunities for all but the economic inequalities brought about by the Spanish system stayed. The system brought great opportunity to the rich people but not to the poor peasants. The free enterprise system encouraged the expansion of the capitalistic economy in the country. This favored American investors and wealthy Filipinos. The U.S. demand for cash crops like sugar and copra (dried coconut meat), inhibited the development of diversified Philippine economy. The people concentrated on agriculture and since the elites own the land and capital, they accumulated more economic benefits from the system. As Benedick Kerkvliet said in his book The Huk Rebellion, "The regime made the Philippines an open market for American manufactured goods and undermined Philippine industries. This did not only substantially decrease production of local consumer goods, but denied rural people alternative source of income."⁷ With this system, the rich became richer and the poor remained poor. Thus, even

⁶Ibid. pp. 314-324.

⁷Benedick Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977, p. 23.

under the so-called benevolent American regime, there were uprisings, as the same old ideal of land and freedom had not been forgotten. There were the "colorum" uprisings of 1923, led by Laureano Salome in Surigao and other areas of northeastern Mindanao which were not subdued for nearly a year; the Tanggulan uprising of 1931, wherein some 40,000 discontented peasants seized the town of Tayug, Pangasinan; and the "Sakdalista" revolt of 1934 where peasants rose in 14 towns from Gapan in Nueva Ecija in the north to Cavite in the south briefly holding Cabuyao and Santa Rosa in Laguna. The "Sakdalista" revolt was motivated by nationalistic yearning and desire for social reforms. These revolts were suppressed by the Philippine Constabulary in bloody battles.⁸ In his Moral Economy of the Peasant, James Scott also says:

The peasant revolutionary sentiment is likely to appear when peasant villages and villagers experience the impact of capitalist market relations in the countryside, for those relations tend to break down age-old system of patron-client (i.e. landlord-tenant) system of reciprocity, which protected peasant cultivators from market risk. Peasants, when they are able, then respond to such historical processes that threaten their "moral economy" by rebelling against their neo-capitalist landlords and the landlords' governmental allies.⁹

A rapid rise in population and the landlord-tenant

⁸Eduardo Lachica, The Huks: Philippine Agrarian Society in Revolt, Praeger Publisher, New York and London, 1971, pp. 64-73.

⁹James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant, New Haven and London, Yale University, 1976, p. 40.

relationship becoming more impersonal led to a worsening tenant's position. William Chapman in his Inside The Philippine Revolution, narrates the social condition in the Philippines then:

But by the 1920s and '30s, a great economic and social change had swept over Central Luzon, one which radically undermined the tenant's security. Today it would be called farm capitalism or agribusiness. The demand for rice at home and sugar abroad soared and a new generation of planters recognized an opportunity for wealth. That wealth would depend on a more efficient use of ancestral resources, the acquisition of more hectarage, and, most of all, a more productive labor force. The result was a loosening of the paternal bonds that had governed hacienda life for generations and the substitution of a cash-crop mentality that had little time for old-fashioned benevolence. Landlords rewrote all the rules under which tenants labored. Instead of loose verbal agreements backed by personal honor there were written contracts binding tenants strictly in their daily work. The all-important loans of rice or cash were either denied or were granted at exorbitant interest rates, sometimes as high as 150 percent. Peasants found themselves charged even for fish caught in plantation ponds. Their contracts, which few understood anyway, levied fees for medical services, irrigation rights, and even the use of religious chapels, all of which had before been part of the owner's patrimony. Moreover, the landlord often moved away to Manila where his new riches could be better enjoyed and displayed and his absence effectively destroyed a once cozy relationship. Peasants were to deal with a hired foreman, whose duty it was to extract a maximum output of rice or sugar at a minimum cost. The objecting tenant was simply moved off his share by force if necessary. The harsh changes were altogether frightening to the peasant and the condition of his servitude produced an unexpected response. He began to fight back.¹⁰

The freedom that the United States brought to the Philippines also led to a political consciousness among the

¹⁰William Chapman, Inside the Philippine Revolution, W.W. Norton & Company, New York & London, 1987, p. 56.

peasants and workers. Labor and peasant leaders appeared and organized the peasants and laborers into unions.¹¹ Crisanto Evangelista, the founder of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) or the Communist Party of the Philippines, helped establish a Marxist-oriented Philippine Printer's Union in 1906. Justus van der Kreof noted in his Communism in South-east Asia; "In 1913, he became one of the leaders of a labor movement, Congresso Obrero de Filipinas (COF) or the Philippine Labor Congress , which for two decades was the country's largest and best organized labor federation."¹² In 1924, Evangelista attempted to run for the position of city councilor in Manila as a member of the Nacionalista party but he failed to be nominated. Afterwards, he and others established their own party, the Partido Obrero de Filipinas or the Labor Party of the Philippines . The program of the party was to become the basis of the Communist Party of the Philippines six years later.¹³ Also in the same year, a radical tenants' and farm workers' association was established which, by 1928, became the Katipunang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (KPMP) or the National Union of

¹¹Teodoro Agoncillo and Oscar Alfonso op. cit., pp. 528-529.

¹²Justus M. van der Kreof, Communism in South-east Asia, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, p. 14.

¹³Richard Kessler, Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1989, p. 30.

Filipino Farmers.¹⁴ Similarly, in 1932, the Agumang ding Madlang Talagapagobra (AMT) or the General Workers' Union was organized with Luis Taruc as the general secretary. By 1939, KPMP had 60,000 members while AMT had 70,000 members mostly coming from Central Luzon where tenancy exceeded all other provinces.¹⁵ These organizations were later to merge with PKP.¹⁶

In all of these organizations, an anti-colonial (that is anti-US) objective was tied to specific demands for the improvement of living conditions such as the eight-hour workday, free education, and reduction in land rent.¹⁷

On August 26, 1930, a total of sixty labor delegates met at the Templo del Trabajo in Tondo, Manila to set up the Communist Party. A modest crowd of 5,000 held a rally at Plaza Moriones, Tondo, Manila on November 7, 1930, and proclaimed the Moscow-oriented Communist Party of the Philippines or the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP). Evangelista headed the party, then composed of a seven-man Politburo and a thirty five-man Central Committee.¹⁸

Evangelista and other communist leaders were arrested on

¹⁴Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁵Benedick Kerkvliet, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁶Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁷Teodoro Agoncillo, op. cit., p. 529.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 97.

a charge of "illegal association", for holding public meetings without official permit in May 1931. On September 14, 1931, Judge Mariano Albert of the Manila Court of First Instance (CFI) found Evangelista and five other members of the PKP guilty of sedition and sentenced them to one year in prison and banished them for eight years to different provinces. The convicted leaders appealed the decision but the Supreme Court affirmed the lower court's decision, and formally outlawed the PKP.¹⁹

According to Kerkvliet:

Organizationally, the PKP was weak during the 1930s. Less than three years after it was formed, many of its members had dropped out or had been in prison or exiled because the government declared it a subversive group. More importantly, the PKP lacked strong ties with the peasantry. Few of its members were peasants, and the party did little political work in the countryside. Most of the active members lived in towns and cities where they focused on labor unions, especially those in Manila. According to the PKP's leadership, the urban proletariat, not the peasantry, would be the backbone of any radical movement in the country and hence required the party's attention.²⁰

The PKP failed to exploit the existing social condition of the country to their advantage. The peasantry comprised 70% of the Philippine citizenry and the Party failed to see it as a vast source of revolutionary power.²¹ The PKP committed a big error when it focused its attention only on the urban

¹⁹Ibid. p. 99.

²⁰Benedick Kerkvliet, op. cit., p. 50.

²¹Victor Corpus, Silent War, VNC Enterprises, Quezon City, Philippines, 1989, p. 52.

proletariat in adopting its revolutionary strategy. When it overlooked the potential of the peasants, the PKP failed to build an organization that had a broad mass base and national in scale. The party and its main organizations were over-
centrated in Central Luzon and in Manila and surrounding
and failed to consider the support of the populace in other provinces. The reestablished Communist Party corrected this error in 1968 by taking the cudde of the peasants' grievances.

In 1929, Pedro Abad Santos, a wealthy lawyer and landlord, founded the Socialist Party with the peasants and rural workers from Pampanga, his home province, constituting his political power base. Abad Santos had served with the Philippine revolutionaries in the war against the Spaniards and then against the Americans. His large legal practice which extended help to the peasants in settling disputes between them and their landlords in Pampanga helped a lot in attracting members to the Socialist Party. As Eduardo Lachica said, "Abad Santos was one of the few lawyers known to give more money to his clients than he ever received from them."²²

On November 7, 1938, the PKP and the Socialist Party merged into one organization.²³ Under the terms of the merger, the name PKP was retained. Some members of Abad

²²Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

²³William Chapman, op. cit., p. 56.

Santos' entourage initially disagreed with the decision to unite with the PKP because they believed that Communist "godlessness" would antagonize the peasantry and that Abad Santos' position in the coalition would be secondary. Abad Santos' decision to merge with the Communist Party, however, prevailed. The apprehension of Abad Santos' followers was well-founded as the PKP would not yield the top command to their new "comrades". Evangelista became the chairman and Abad Santos, the vice chairman.²⁴ Although Abad Santos accepted the position, the merger was not a happy one. His colleagues were indifferent and did not participate in jointly called projects. They resisted PKP directives to hook up their units to the Communist party machinery and they refused to attend conferences.²⁵ Even with these differences though, the merger held.

In 1935, the Americans established the Commonwealth Government which was a transitory government run by the Filipinos to prepare them for independence. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 provided that ten years after the establishment of the Commonwealth, the United States would withdraw her sovereignty over the Philippines and recognize the independence of the Islands. There was no indication, however, that the communist participated in the Commonwealth

²⁴Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

²⁵Ibid. p. 102.

government as Agoncillo said, "In the Philippines, Marxist or communist elements appear to have played no part in the independence movement from the Americans."²⁶

C. JAPANESE OCCUPATION PERIOD (1941-1945)

The American colonial period was disrupted by the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II. Japan invaded and captured the Philippines on December 10, 1941 and established an occupational government until the liberation of the country in 1945.

In January 1942 principal PKP leaders, among them Pedro Abad Santos and Crisanto Evangelista, were arrested by the Japanese when the latter occupied Manila. Evangelista was executed, while Abad Santos was released and allowed to go back to his hometown in Pampanga as he was too ill to cause trouble to the Japanese. He died of his lingering illness in 1945. But the following month after the capture of the leaders, a conference of remaining party members of the PKP, now headed by Vicente Lava, and some other resistance leaders met at Cabiao in Nueva Ecija province and formed the resistance army, the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon or People's Army Against the Japanese (Hukbalahap or Huks for short). The Communist counter-government also established numerous Barrio United Defence Corps (BUDC) units, composed of from five to a

²⁶Teodoro Agoncillo, op. cit., pp. 386-392.

dozen persons in the villages, which recruited members for the Hukbalahap. The BUDC units collected funds and intelligence and provided transportation for the Huks' strike units. As stated by Eduardo Lachica, "The BUDC was an underground 'government' that imposed taxes on the village people to support the Huk operations." The PKP-created Hukbalahap had a strength of 10,000 by March 1943.²⁷

The Huks ambushed Japanese patrols and convoys, attacked detachments, and conducted raids on enemy camps. In one of their attacks in Nueva Ecija, the Huks reported 150 Japanese casualties. On March 5, 1943, a Japanese offensive was launched against the Huks and captured many Huk cadres and soldiers. Among those who escaped the encirclement were Vicente Lava, now the leader of the PKP, and Luis Taruc, who became the commander of its military arm, the Hukbalahap. Crushed by their defeat, the party leaders abandoned the initial strategy of continuous harassment of the enemy and adopted one of "retreat for defense" by dividing Hukbalahap units into small bands in an effort to escape through Japanese lines. The new strategy was put into effect, resulting in diminished Huk contacts with the Japanese. In September 1944, the Bagumbali Conference declared the "retreat for defense" policy was incorrect. The conference decided to regroup the

²⁷Justus van der Kreof, op. cit., pp. 23-24. Also see Lachica, pp. 109-110.

Hukbalahap forces and resume the harassment of the enemy.²⁸

Throughout the resistance struggle there were also traces of class war which had begun in the 1930s. Some of the landlords were killed by the Huks who saw in the war the opportunity to settle old scores. Many of the landed elites fled to Manila and other cities. The Huks gained popular support during the war as a nationalist, anti-Japanese army.²⁹

In September 1944 the Hukbalahap leadership and the PKP called for an all-out offensive against the Japanese regime to be coordinated with the approaching American forces. After the American forces landed in Leyte to liberate the country, the Hukbalahap fought side by side with the liberating forces mostly in Central Luzon pursuing the retreating Japanese forces.³⁰ By the end of the war in 1945, the Huks were popular heroes in much of Central Luzon.

D. POST WORLD WAR II (1945-1965)

After the war, in 1945, the members of the Hukbalahap returned to their hometown to farm and raise their families. Although most Huk units retained their weapons, there was at first no concerted plan for using them. Anticipating the

²⁸Richard J. Kessler, *op.cit.*, p. 33, see also Lachica, pp. 114-116.

²⁹William Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁰Benedick Kerkvliet, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-109.

country's independence after the Commonwealth government, the peasant groups and the PKP, intended to use their popularity and unity to pressure the postwar establishment for social reform. During the closing months of the liberation, the Americans turned against the Hukbalahap charging them of being communist subversives. The Philippine Constabulary began arresting Hukbalahap participants for refusing to surrender their firearms.³¹ On July 4, 1946, the Philippines got its independence from the Americans and President Manuel Roxas (1946-1949) was elected in the 1946 presidential elections.

The war brought financial difficulties to the landlords. When they went back to their farms from the cities where they sought refuge during the war, the landlords became more repressive. They wanted the peasants to pay back rent they had not paid during the war period. The landlords likewise refused to give the peasants the interest-free loan they needed very badly during the pre-harvest season. As a result of these disputes, many peasants were evicted from their farms.³²

Eager to maintain its wartime United Front policy, the PKP formed the Democratic Alliance composed of liberals, communists, civil-liberties advocates, farmers and labor leaders. Its platform was on agrarian reform popularized in the prewar period. Six candidates of the Democratic Alliance

³¹Ibid. p. 112.

³²Ibid. pp. 118-120.

ran and won in the Congressional elections of 1946. However, these six elected congressmen which included Luis Taruc and Jesus Lava were not allowed to take their seats by the elite-controlled government claiming that these congressmen had used terror and other illegal means to win. Actually, the elite feared that the reforms to be initiated by these congressmen would undermine their interest and control on the peasantry. These Congressmen were agitating for reforms in tenant treatment and wages. Their major demand was a sixty-percent share of the harvest instead of the prewar standard of fifty percent.³³

The ejection of the Democratic Alliance congressmen, the murder of Juan Feleo, one of the spokesmen of the peasant organization, Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) or National Peasants Union, and the abuse and repression of the landlords and the government troops ignited the rebellion. The Huks resumed their military campaign, this time against the newly installed Philippine Republic. The rebellion was confined mainly to Central Luzon and part of Southern Luzon.³⁴ By the early 1950s they had become a serious threat to the country.

In the post-war rebellion the government troops were often outnumbered in clashes with the insurgents. In March 1950, the

³³Ibid. pp. 150-151.

³⁴Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., p. 121.

dissidents attacked San Pablo City, killed one army officer and raised the hammer and sickle in the heart of the town. Another band stripped a Constabulary outpost in San Mateo, Rizal and in San Rafael, Bulacan, four soldiers were killed and seven wounded. In August 1950, two hundred partisans attacked Camp Macabulos, Tarlac and killed twenty-five officers and soldiers. Another 300 dissidents attacked Santa Cruz, Laguna and released 20 prisoners after killing three soldiers.³⁵

The Army estimated that the Hukbalahap had 100,000 members and supporters with as many as 12,000 armed, active soldiers at the height of their power (1949-1951). The problem of Huks was that they did not have enough firearms then to arm their members. The government forces at the time had 37,000 men which were divided between the Philippine Constabulary and the Army. The largest force of 24,000 out of 37,000 was in the Constabulary, which had the responsibility of dealing with the Hukbalahap as the government considered it as a peace and order problem.³⁶

During the regime of President Quirino (1949-1953), the tide was turned against the Huks by his Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay. He envisioned a novel approach to the Huk

³⁵Ibid. op. cit., pp. 129-130.

³⁶Alvin H. Scaff, The Philippine Answer to Communism, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1955, p. 27-28.

problem, premised on the principle of "all-out force, all-out friendship." At the political level, by working for a clean and honest government, Magsaysay restored the people's faith in democracy. He also diverted development resources to the rural areas where the roots of the social injustice and discontent were found.

When Magsaysay reorganized the military in 1950, the Philippine Constabulary (its reputation weakened by human rights abuses) was integrated into the regular armed forces and its primary responsibility for the campaign against the Huks given to the army. The army too was reorganized and increased to 22,500. Command changes permitted young officers with actual combat experience to be promoted. Small units were deployed: seven-man Scout Ranger teams collected intelligence, set up ambushes and conducted psychological warfare against the Huks. Magsaysay also inspired his men, promoting, demoting, and decorating them in the field. Richard Kessler argued that "if after being named Defense Secretary, he had not implemented these command changes, the military might have collapse under the weight of its own ineptitude."³⁷ The military became more effective in tracking Huk units to their hideouts and repression of the peasants declined as a result of these military reforms. In 1950, the military caught the brains of the Huk Politburo. The arrest of the members of the

³⁷Richard Kessler, op. cit., p. 34.

Politburo led to the demoralization of Huk rank and file. Many surrendered and were imprisoned.

Magsaysay was able to implement the reforms with the support of the United States. The U.S. provided weapons, training, and funds to the military. The well-digging program was also funded by the Americans, and the U.S. Information Service organized the military's psychological warfare and the public relations program. Richard Kessler continues to say, "American military officers even went on combat operations as 'noncombatant observers.' All these efforts dampened enthusiasm for rebellion."³⁸ In 1950 when he became president, (1953-1957) Magsaysay continued the strategy and the Huk movement lost its glamour. In 1954, Luis Taruc, the leader of the movement, surrendered and was sentenced to twelve years in prison. His unconditional surrender further demoralized the movement. Many of his men surrendered or were captured. By this time, most Huk units had been disbanded and some degenerated into bands of armed racketeers. In 1954, the leadership of the PKP abandoned the revolution. Eduardo Lachica in his book The Huks said, "The Huk rebellion was for all practical purposes over."³⁹

The Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act 1700 known as the Anti-Subversion Law in June 1957 which declared the PKP to

³⁸Ibid. p. 34.

³⁹Eduardo Lachica, op. cit., p. 132.

be illegal and membership in it a felony. The remaining Huk stragglers resorted to commission of organized crime and banditry, though making occasional pronouncements on the need for justice and reform for the tenant farmers. As a result, some left-leaning, strong nationalist Filipino youth, intellectuals, and trade unionists in the 1960s turned to communist-infiltrated political, cultural and economic organizations and interest groups.⁴⁰

In November 1964, Jose Maria Sison, who was indoctrinated in Red China, organized the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) or the Patriotic Youth in the universities in Manila. As most of its members were students from the different provinces, KM was the first and most successful attempt to unite the urban middle-class radicals with the peasant groups.⁴¹

E. THE MARCOS REGIME (1965-1986)

It was under the regime of President Marcos that the reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was formed. On December 26, 1968, Jose Maria Sison, organized the CPP, a Maoist-leaning movement, in a barrio of Pangasinan, with ten other members. In reestablishing the CPP, Sison produced two overriding achievements. The first was the formation of the link between students and the peasants. The

⁴⁰Justus van der Kreof, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴¹William Chapman, op. cit., p. 73.

peasants supplied the army and the students the ideological cement that held it all together. The second achievement was in the transformation of nationalism in the 1950s into Marxist ideology and support for armed revolt.⁴²

Bernabe Buscayno, alias Kumander Dante, formerly of the PKP, joined the party and, in March 29, 1969 formed the military arm of the CPP, the New Peoples Army (NPA), with sixty men and thirty-five firearms.⁴³ The CPP believed that in accordance with the semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions of the Philippines, the Party must build a People's Army whose support and source of soldiers is the peasantry.

By 1970, the KM had gathered enough strength and organized violent demonstrations in Manila. The early 1970s was the height of world-wide student activism and the CPP rode on this rebellious spirit among the students. The CPP also worked on the media and the labor unions and harnessed them against what they call the enemies of the people--US imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. It also started to launch a series of bombings in Manila and nearby cities.⁴⁴

In July 1972, the government foiled an attempt by the CPP to ship 3,500 firearms from China. Because of the deteriorating peace and order and the Muslim secessionist

⁴²Ibid. p. 83.

⁴³Richard Kessler, op. cit., pp 41-42.

⁴⁴Aspect of CPP Insurgency, G2 Division , Fort Bonifacio, Metro Manila, (n.d.), pp.5-6.

problem in southern Philippines, President Marcos declared Martial Law on September 21, 1972. Many CPP members and student activists were arrested. Others escaped to the hills and joined the newly formed NPA.

By August 1980, the CPP had claimed to have a strong party apparatus in every region and the nationwide spread of guerrilla warfare. It further claimed that it had organized 26 guerilla fronts with 8,000 armed men. In 1981, the intelligence reports of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) however, estimated the NPA's strength at 5,943, with 3,703 firearms, and mass supporters of 232,076 people out of the total population of 49 million. By 1987, AFP intelligence reports indicated a dramatic increase in the enemy strength as shown in Table 1 (Appendix A). AFP estimated the NPA's strength at 25,200 and firearms at 12,288.⁴⁵ The NPA also succeeded in increasing its guerrilla fronts from 26 in 1981 to 72 in 1987 when they attained the peak of their strength as shown in Table 2 (Appendix B).

A guerrilla front is a politico-military-geographical unit of the CPP-NPA which consist of:⁴⁶

1. A political organization usually made up of a front committee, with districts, sections, and barrio revolutionary committees under it.

⁴⁵Intelligence Statistics on CPP/NPA, compiled by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2) Philippine Army, 1988.

⁴⁶Victor Corpus op. cit., p. 139.

2. A military organization made up of a regular mobile force or forces varying in size from platoon (30 men) up to a company (90 men), armed propaganda teams, and local militia.
3. A front territory or an area of operation consisting of several municipalities. Most are located along provincial boundaries with mountainous and forested terrain but there are some which are located in the plains, along coastlines, and in depressed areas of the urban centers.

Bernabe Buscayno together with other ranking communist leaders was captured in late 1976, while Jose Maria Sison was captured by the government forces in 1977. They were charged with rebellion and detained in an army camp until their release in 1986 when the Aquino administration took over the government.

The Philippines has enjoyed a booming economy during the early part of President Marcos term. The gross national product (GNP) had grown to an average of seven percent per year during the 1970's. There were however some structural defects in the economy which negated the high growth rate. The government went into a borrowing spree to finance the investments aimed at rapid industrialization.⁴⁷ When the second oil shock occurred in 1979, the Philippines was one of the hardest hit. Faced with increased cost of oil imports, declining prices of its major export crops and a steep increase in the interest on its foreign borrowings, the

⁴⁷Revolution in the Philippines: Kessing's Special Report, Martin Wright, (ed.), St, James Press, Chicago & London, 1988, p. 69.

country experienced its worst balance of payment crisis at the end of 1982.⁴⁸

The neglect of the agricultural development of the country, emphasis on import substitution in the manufacturing sector and the use of foreign borrowings to finance high level investments to achieve rapid industrialization were basically the fundamental flaw in the economic development strategy of the country. The lack of interest in improving the agricultural sector was aggravated by the imposition of price control policy which was biased against the farmers, and favoring the urban consumers to keep the industrial wages down.⁴⁹

The assassination of the former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., the leading critic of President Marcos, on August 21, 1983 caused a severe political and economic crisis to the nation. The Filipino people condemned the killing and blamed President Marcos for it. The CPP took advantage of this political crisis and the event provided an opportunity for political propaganda and expansion of CPP-NPA activities in the countryside. This event in 1983 contributed to the rise of the CPP-NPA membership, as shown in Table 1 (Appendix A).

⁴⁸Bernardo Villegas, "The Economic Crisis", Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era and Beyond, John Bresnan, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1986, p. 114.

⁴⁹Ibid. pp. 151-153.

F. THE AQUINO REGIME (1986-1992)

Corazon Aquino, the widow of the slain former Senator Benigno Aquino, assumed the Presidency after Marcos was ousted in the February 1986 revolution. Upon her assumption of office, she granted amnesty and released a number of political prisoners as part of a confidence-building gesture to pursue her reconciliation program. Among those released were top leaders of the CPP-NPA like Buscayno and Sison. Buscayno did not rejoin the communist movement, instead he organized a farmers' cooperative with the government's help in Tarlac province. Sison, on the other hand, left the Philippines several months later on a purported lecture tour and never returned. He sought political asylum but was turned down twice by the Netherlands.⁵⁰

In 1992, the CPP exhibited ideological differences in its leadership. An Orthodox group headed by Sison advocates the continued implementation of the traditional Maoist strategy of protracted people's war that gradually encircles the cities from the countryside. On the other hand a Revisionist Group or the so-called "insurrectionist" believes that an accelerated expansion of insurgent forces and the conduct of increased urban guerilla warfare and mass actions is the better way of

⁵⁰John McBeth, "Internal Contradictions," Far East Economic Review, August 26, 1993, p. 16.

seizing political power.⁵¹ The rift among party leaders has taken its toll on the dissident movement, particularly in terms of the decline in manpower, capability and mass support.

It was during the term of President Aquino that the influence of the CPP-NPA started to decline. In Chapter IV, the author will discuss the initiatives of the government in its counterinsurgency efforts.

⁵¹Rigoberto Tiglao, "Fraternal Foes," Far East Economic Review, January 14, 1993, p. 18.

III. COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES-NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (CPP-NPA) STRATEGY

The defeat of the Huks in the middle of the 1950s, gave the new movement, the CPP-NPA, lessons and insights on how to wage guerilla warfare against the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The CPP-NPA viewed the errors of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) on the ideological, political, military and organizational aspects.⁵²

Ideologically, the old PKP was guilty of subjectivism. The party leadership interpreted the Party laws to advance their personal agenda. Recruitment activity was concentrated at the large petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry was given less importance. The error was attributed to the existing social conditions in the Philippines then. The Lava leadership was criticized as lacking in insight as to the nature of a proletarian revolutionary ideology and failed to apply it in real situations. Lava failed to see the Philippines as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country.

Politically, the PKP failed to mobilize the peasantry nationwide as its main force. Moreover, the leadership underestimated the government forces, and believed that the movement could take over the country in two years.

⁵² Aspects of CPP Insurgency, Headquarters Intelligence Division, Philippine Army, n.d., p. 45.

Militarily, the party did not realize the strength of its opponent. It launched attacks that were at the outset successful but disastrous in the long-run. When surprise was lost, the Huks were badly decimated in battle. The Huks did not exploit their inherent strength as guerrilla forces by spreading their units out in the countryside and, thus, in the process, dissipating the government forces. Concentrating their army in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog, they were easily encircled by superior government forces, leading to their annihilation.

Finally, the PKP failed to build an organization that had a broad mass base and was national in scale. The party and its main organizations were over-concentrated in Central Luzon and in Manila and surrounding areas and failed to consider the support of the populace in the other provinces. It held the delusion that if it could gain control of Central Luzon, then the entire Luzon would easily follow.⁵³

The CPP-NPA tried to rectify the errors committed by the PKP. What distinguishes the CPP-NPA from the PKP-HUK movement are:

1. Ideological - The adaptation of Mao Tse Tung's thoughts and concepts in the revolutionary struggle, that is a peasant led revolution as against the PKP's concentration on the urban proletariat leading the revolution.
2. Political - The initiation of an insurgency that should be identified with the masses, and prosecution of a

⁵³Ibid. pp. 8-10.

struggle against U.S.imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism; and

3. Organizational - The formation of a Communist Party that is proletariat in character and guided by Mao Tse Tung thoughts; the mobilization of peasants, workers and students "to participate actively and on a national scale in the proletariat revolution that is essentially an agrarian revolution" and the organization of the National United Front (NUF) as the political weapon to destroy and isolate the government.

The insurgency mounted by the CCP-NPA has a three staged strategy, as adopted from Mao Tse Tung's ideas. The insurgents viewed conflict on a stage-by-stage process. The three staged strategies of the movement are:⁵⁴

1. Strategic Defensive stage - this is the crucial period of party building, army building, base building and the organization of the united front. It is when guerrilla forces are developed and deployed nationwide. At the same time, political structures are organized in the countryside and people are organized to support the movement. When popular support is fully developed, urban warfare is started. This stage has three sub-stages;
 - (a) Early substage - Activities undertaken by the CPP are: 1) development of a political apparatus and spread to every region of the country; 2) NPA's development of guerrilla forces and spread nationwide;
 - (b) Advance substage -At this substage, the united effort is intensified, at the same time, guerrilla warfare is increased in intensity with the increase in firearms. In the countryside, popular support has fully developed while urban guerrilla units are fielded in urban centers;
 - (c) Strategic counter-offensive-this is where more militant forms of mass actions are initiated in urban centers while larger-scale tactical offensives will be launched in the countryside.

⁵⁴Victor Corpus, op. cit., pp. 27-31.

2. Strategic Stalemate. In this stage, the balance of force between the government forces and the insurgent forces is even. The conflict becomes a tug-of-war on strategic towns, cities and large areas. The stage of the strategic stalemate is reached when the NPA forces become capable of mustering larger formations. These may consist of company or battalion-size regular mobile units, depending on the terrain and the extent of room for maneuver.
3. Strategic Offensive. The balance of forces now favors the insurgents who gain moral supremacy. The government is now completely weakened and isolated. Government forces are forced into strategic defensive.

The CPP-NPA strategy is to start guerilla organization work in remote areas. Small cells are initially organized and eventually expanded and developed into liberated zones on the larger islands of the country. The NPA try to gain the trust of the peasants by using familiar communist tactics of ostensibly siding with them; killing unpopular landlords, agents, and government officials; extracting retribution and vengeance for peasant "wrongs"; protecting villages; and when it has gained foothold on the village it begin imposing itself on villages to indoctrinate and regiment the inhabitants.⁵⁵

The strategy is based on the analysis that the Philippines is basically a semi-feudal society. Insurgents view the country's economy as predominantly agricultural, in which most of the population is composed of poor landless peasants living in the countryside.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Edgar O'Ballance, "The Communist New People's Army," Military Review, February 1988, p. 12.

⁵⁶Victor Corpus, op. cit., p. 33.

To the CPP, the mobilization of the people requires more than just persuasion. It requires intimidation, followed by organization. The basic source of CPP power necessary to mobilize the support of the people and organize them for national salvation does not lie in the communist ideology, but rather in the slumbering needs, grievances, emotions, and hatreds of the people, individually and collectively. Through the political underground infrastructure supported by the NPA, the people in the rural areas receive a one-sided education of political ideas designed to change their thinking about the present social, political, and economic systems in the country. The CPP considers the education and the brainwashing of the people as being "half of the resistance work" as the CPP believes that it will be easier to organize and mobilize the people.⁵⁷ The organization of the people starts at the lowest political and social organization, the barangay or barrio. At present, the barangay is composed of 100 to 200 families headed by a chairman who is elected by his constituents.

Captured CPP documents reveal that communist expansion and organizational work in a barangay is carried out in four steps: social investigation, live-in/work with the people, teach-in/education and development of mass organizations and party structures. The CPP sends out small political units

⁵⁷Alexander Aguirre, op. cit., p. 113.

consisting of political cadres armed for their own personal protection and for the psychological effect the presence of guns creates in the barrio population. It was essential to understand Mao's great thought: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun". The CPP believes that it takes the power of the gun to safely enter a rural barangay and it takes the power of the gun to make the people assemble and listen to what the political cadres had to say about the government.⁵⁸

The initial contacts in the barrio are formed into Barrio Liason Groups (BLG). The function of the BLG include assisting the cadres in conducting a more thorough social investigation, introducing the cadres secretly to other revolutionary elements in the barrio or the adjacent barrios. They also help in spreading revolutionary propaganda and providing security to the cadres while they are in the barrio. When the BLG have been set up in a number of barrios and if there is already an area wide enough for the first armed group to maneuver, firearms are then smuggled to the area to the first squad of the Sandatahang Yunit Pampropaganda (SYP) or the Armed Propaganda Unit.⁵⁹

Through the liaison groups, the armed squad now intensifies its organizing activities. It moves from one barrio to another to conduct deeper social investigation and

⁵⁸Ibid. pp. 113-114.

⁵⁹Victor Corpus, op. cit., p. 37.

carry out meetings with the people. The political objective and the political program of the CPP are explained to the people in these meetings. Everyone is made to understand why the revolution must be fought and how it concerns him. Most important, the political cadres link the political program with the developments of the revolution and with the life of the people, showing to them that their future depends on the success of the revolution under the auspices of the CPP, and not on the present social, economic and political system under the government. When the conditions are ripe, the armed squad then sets up the people's Organizing Group (OG). This includes the peasant organizing group and other mass organizations (i.e., women, youth, farm workers, fishermen, etc.)⁶⁰ The organizing group has seven to ten members.

The establishment of the people's Organizing Committee (OC) on a barrio-wide scale follows the setting up of the mass organization. Committees on organization, education, economy, health, and defense are formed. Like the organizing groups, the OC is clandestine and underground. Initially these Organizing Committees and Organizing Groups are skeletal, but they gradually gain flesh as the people are mobilized. When these finally become operational, the barrio party branch and the barrio revolutionary committee are set up next. The barrio revolutionary council totally replaces the legitimate

⁶⁰Ibid. p. 37.

officials of the barrio. This becomes the insurgents' organ of political power, or what some refer to as the "shadow government."⁶¹

The CPP-NPA implemented its own agrarian reform program to win over the peasantry. The program includes: reduction of land rent, withholding part of the crops without the landlord's knowledge, reduction of interest rates, control of usurious practices, arranging fairer prices with the merchant middlemen, raising production, improving productivity, convincing peasants to default on government loans, establishing credit unions, mutual aid terms and labor exchanges, and setting up market cooperatives. In cases of despotic landlords who abuse their tenants, the landlord (or their overseers) are given strict warnings or punished outright. By involving the poor and lower-middle peasants in these activities through the peasant associations they set up, the NPA mobilizes the vast majority of the peasantry.

In the Strategic Defensive Stage of the reestablished communist movement, there were five identifiable phases of development.⁶² The first was the Urban Phase that started in 1968 until 1972, when President Marcos declared Martial Law. The second phase was the Rural Phase, starting from 1972

⁶¹Ibid. p. 37. Also see Philippine Army Special Operations Team Manual, Headquarters Philippine Army, Fort Bonifacio, Manila, 1989, pp. 9-10.

⁶²Richard Kessler, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

up to the late 1970s. In this phase, the party initiated expansion works on the countryside. Martial Law eased the shift of the struggle from the urban to the countryside. Emboldened by the new recruits who flocked in great numbers after the declaration of Martial Law, the Party undertook expansion in the southern part of the country during this period. The third phase from 1976 to 1980 was a period of consolidation. Party work was concentrated on instituting political and military organizations in Mindanao, Negros, Samar and the Bicol region. The fourth phase in the early 1980s was marked by a series of tactical offensives. Military activities were concentrated in Northern and Eastern Mindanao and political activities in the Central and Western Visayas, forming political fronts to prepare for the "national uprising". At the beginning of 1986, the popularity of the CPP-NPA began to peak. They were expecting an advancement into the Strategic Stalemate Stage, however, the decision to boycott the presidential elections contested by Marcos and Corazon Aquino and their failure to anticipate Aquino's victory, caused many supporters to desert the movement, thereby disrupting their time table. After President Aquino ordered the release of all political prisoners from detention the party was forced to reassess its basic strategy of armed conflict in the light of the popularity of the new president.

The expiration of the Mutual Bases Agreement between the Philippines and the United States in 1991 and the eventual

pull out of Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base in 1992, has removed one major issue in the insurgent's political offensive against the government. The collapse of communism internationally has also eroded the ideological base of the CPP-NPA.

The agrarian reform program of the CPP-NPA is most appealing to the peasants. For the CPP-NPA, land reform had become an effective means of winning the loyalty and support of peasants. Gregg Jones in his book Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement observes that as a result of the land reform: "...NPA territory had expanded from 45 barrios to 192 barrios in 20 towns in Quezon...." He continues to say, "The population under varying degree of rebel control rose from 7,000 to 35,000--about 10 percent of the inhabitants of the provinces of Nueva Viscaya and Quezon."⁶³

⁶³Gregg Jones, Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement, Westview Press Inc., Boulder, 1989, pp. 176-177.

IV. THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCY RESPONSE (1968-1992)

A. THE MARCOS REGIME (1965-1986)

After the revival of the communist movement in 1968 by Jose Sison, the strategy of the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the insurgents was primarily the use of force against force. The AFP fought the insurgents by deploying its forces in communist affected areas. After establishing their camps in the affected areas, military forces conducted search and destroy patrols against the insurgents. The strategy, however, was ineffective for the insurgents would just move out of the area of operation of the military. Once an area is declared to be cleared, AFP forces announced a military victory and thereafter pulled out. The CCP-NPA would then return, and threaten, punish or liquidate civilians who collaborated with the soldiers. Moreover, in "search and destroy" operations, soldiers, at times, became abusive by stealing properties of the populace, extorting food, or committing human rights atrocities. One incident of the atrocities committed by soldiers sometime in 1981 is narrated by Gregg Jones in his Red Revolution:

...the soldiers entered the barrio of Naddungan in Gattaran a town of Cagayan Province looking for NPA rebels reportedly hiding in the village. Spotting the soldiers, one farmer ran to his house. The soldiers apparently mistook him for a guerrilla seeking cover, opened fire on the bamboo hut. When the shooting stopped, the man's wife

and three children were dead. The farmer survived but had one arm amputated....⁶⁴

Soldiers conducting extended search and destroy operations often take the crops and livestock of the farmers without compensation when their provisions run out. Civilians are forced to leave their homes for fear of being caught in the cross fire when the military conducts operations in their villages and when they return, find their homes looted by the soldiers.

In July 1972, the government foiled an attempt by the CPP to bring in 3,500 firearms from China. The deteriorating peace and order situation in the urban areas brought about by violent demonstrations by the student and labor sectors prompted President Marcos to declare Martial Law on September 21, 1972. Many CPP members and student activists were arrested. Others escaped to the hills and joined the newly formed NPA. (In March 1969, Bernabe Buscayno, joined the CPP and formed the NPA as the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines drawing from the peasantry for membership).

With the lifting of Martial Law in 1981, the AFP for the first time ever put up in formal form a comprehensive strategy to fight the insurgency. This strategy was embodied in the Letter of Instructions (LOI) KATATAGAN (Stability) which was aimed to depart from the traditional combat operations of the

⁶⁴Ibid. p. 27.

AFP and adopted the principle that the key to success in counterinsurgency operations is popular support of the people.⁶⁵

The strategy contained four key objectives:

1. Prevention of insurgency from taking root--to be accomplished by development activities, civil relation operations, intelligence, police action and small-unit tactical operations in threatened areas.
2. Keeping the people on the side of the government and involving them in the fight against insurgents--to be attained by acting on the grievances and ministering to the needs of the people to win their "hearts and minds".
3. Neutralization of the insurgent leadership at all levels and denying them access to manpower and material resources--through the intensified grassroots intelligence and resource control operations.
4. Development of the AFP into a well-motivated and civil relations-oriented counterinsurgency force.

To attain LOI KATATAGAN's objectives, the AFP developed a national campaign plan, carried out in successive waves. There were four stages in the strategic campaign:

1. Clearing operations,
2. Holding operations,
3. Consolidation, and
4. Development activities.

First, the military clears the insurgent affected areas of enemy and armed groups through combined combat and civilian

⁶⁵Alexander Aguirre, op. cit., p. 2.

military operations. Second, the military maintains security in the area, eliminate the CPP political underground infrastructure and rehabilitate the people affected by the insurgency. Civil government agencies concerned come into the area and contribute their share by way of delivering essential services to the people, such as construction of farm to market roads by the Department of Public Works and Highways, providing basic health care by the Department of Health and extending agricultural loans by the Land Bank. Third, security operation is maintained and immediate social, economic, political and other reforms are undertaken by the civil government agencies. The fourth, and the last phase is the establishment of permanent security and livelihood projects to enable the people to be self-reliant and self-sufficient towards the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life.⁶⁶ Permanent security measures involves the formation of Civil Defense Units. Livelihood projects include vegetable gardening, cattle fattening, goat raising, dressmaking and tailoring.

Since 1981, the AFP implemented civil military operations by organizing CMO platoons at the battalion level. The activities of the platoons were primarily in stages one and four of the campaign especially in initiating development

⁶⁶LOI Katatagan Handbook, General Headquarters Armed Forces of the Philippines, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 1983, p. 5.

projects, assistance, and propaganda against the CPP-NPA in priority areas.

The basic weapon of LOI KATATAGAN was civil military operation (CMO), a strategy that embraces the political, economic, social and psychological aspects of military operations. CMO includes actions embracing the relationship between the military forces and civil authorities and people in the area of operations and development assistance activities. Civil relations, home defense, intelligence and tactical operations were integrated harmoniously in the general development efforts of the government. One example was the Army Literacy Patrol System formed in 1982, which employed soldiers to provide education and free medical services in the communities.⁶⁷

Civil relations aim was to counter communist organizational and psychological offensives in the rural and urban areas where insurgents develop mass support. According to the AFP doctrine, civil relations consist of six activities:

1. Command information
2. Community relations
3. Public information
4. Psychological operations
5. Strategic psychological operations

⁶⁷Richard Kessler, op. cit., p. 141.

6. Consolidation psychological operations

As according to the Civil Relations Program Handbook of the AFP:

Command information embraces activities designed to inform, educate and motivate the military personnel, paramilitary forces and the civilian employees of the AFP as public servants and protector of the people. Community relations is to propagate good relationship between the military community and the civilian community to get the support of the local population. Public information utilizes all forms of communication media to inform the public of the government's programs. It includes the AFP's efforts to develop public awareness and understanding of the AFP's role in the counterinsurgency program to eventually gain popular support and cooperation in the implementation of government programs. Psychological operations includes psychological warfare and the political, military, economic and ideological actions conducted to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes and behavior of the target audience. It exploits all feasible means in which the target audience can be influenced. Strategic psychological operations embrace the use of media to enlist the support of the international community and to negate the propaganda of the enemy. And, consolidation psychological operations are activities directed towards the population in controlled areas designed to promote cooperation and goodwill to advance political and military objectives.⁶⁸

To support security operations, home defense activities were conducted alongside with civil relations. Primarily, its activities were directed toward the mobilization of the citizenry and initiating active involvement in countering subversive encroachment into communities.

The LOI KATATAGAN strategy, however, was adopted by the AFP from the American concept of fighting a guerilla warfare

⁶⁸General Headquarters, AFP, Civil Relations Program, prepared by GHQ, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, April 19, 1982.

in Low Intensity Conflict. The Americans had introduced this idea during Secretary of Defense Ramon Magsaysay's campaigns against the Huks in the 1950s and proven to be effective in reducing the Huk rebellion, from a major national security threat to that of disorganized bands of armed racketeers. It was impractical, however, to implement the strategy nationwide since it called for economic development in almost all areas threatened by communist insurgents. The government does not have sufficient resources to develop the countryside. President Ferdinand Marcos attempted to do so with grand infrastructure projects and the National Livelihood Program or Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran (KKK) but failed.⁶⁹ This program promoted waste utilization and agricultural, livestock and light industry enterprises. Because of the faltering economy of the country in the 1980s, there were no adequate financial resources to support the civil-military programs of the AFP. The absence of the essential services ought to be provided by the local officials in the realization of the livelihood projects under the KKK program eroded the credibility of the government in pursuing its economic development program in the countryside. When AFP officers, therefore, would implement CMO, the usual complaint was the absence of essential services which ought to be provided by

⁶⁹Colonel Rene Dado, The Philippine Army's Special Operations Team (SOT): Management and Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency. (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Manila, 1989).

local officials. There was no sufficient resources to support livelihood projects.

The CPP-NPA continued to grow in strength and became increasingly active. It exploited the government failure to improve the quality of life among the populace. Field reports and data indicated a rise from 5,943 in 1981 to 24,430 in 1986 of regular members and an increase from 26 to 64 guerrilla fronts (Table 1).

The main thrust and concepts of the strategy were fundamentally sound in addressing the problems of insurgency, however, there was a wide gap between the plan and its implementation. AFP resources intended for counterinsurgency operations were channeled to the defense of the seat of national government at Malacanang. Far from preventing the insurgency from taking root and/or neutralizing the insurgents, the AFP had not stopped the CPP-NPA from expanding and mustering greater strength.⁷⁰

B. THE AQUINO REGIME (1986-1992)

The "People's Power Revolution" of February 1986 which resulted in the non-violent overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship by some sectors of the military, brought Corazon Aquino to the presidency. The decisive role played by the AFP in this event restored back the trust and confidence of the

⁷⁰Alexander Aguirre, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

people in their armed forces. The military was pictured as an oppressor of the people during the regime of Marcos due to the atrocities and human rights abuses committed by some soldiers during the Martial Law years.

The Aquino administration embarked on a goal of national reconciliation and unification. As a confidence-building gesture, she released the political prisoners from prison. In view of this national objective, the AFP revised its strategy and formulated Letter of Instruction MAMAMAYAN (Pro-People). The concepts of security and development were still maintained, however, unlike LOI KATATAGAN, it was designed to be people-oriented wherein the defense and protection of the people were foremost.

The policies on strategic guidance and concepts of LOI MAMAMAYAN were:

1. The protection of the people from the insurgent actions and reprisals as the primordial consideration in the conduct of AFP and Integrated National Police (INP) security operations. This protection must be apparent, effective and stable, so that the people can recognize its existence, can depend on it, and will be confident of the future. Protection is to be undertaken by the AFP, INP, or by the people themselves.
2. The AFP and the INP should actively support and promote the New Government's policy of national reconciliation and unification through the civil relation activities and public information campaign designed to bring back the dissidents to the fold of the law. The AFP and the INP shall help implement the guidelines appertaining to the grant of amnesty and the dissident-returnee rehabilitation program promulgated by the new administration.
3. The AFP and the INP participation in the program of the

New Government is to create and strengthen the spirit of nationhood among our people. AFP personnel should be educated of the important aspects of the Filipino nation, its sociological composition, history, basis and operation of government culture.⁷¹

In the implementation of this new approach to counterinsurgency, President Aquino, likewise abolished the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF), a paramilitary force of 65,000 members. This group was notorious for human rights abuses and a source of irritants among the populace. Envisioned as a territorial force tasked to provide security to the villages from the intimidation and coercion of the enemy, some CHDF members committed abuses against the very people they were to protect.

President Aquino established the Peace and Order Council (POC) to ensure the preservation and maintenance of peace and order as a foundation for development, stability and national security. It was organized in the national level down to the municipal level chaired by the Department of Interior and Local Government. The president likewise promulgated in 1986, the National Reconciliation and Development Program (NRDP) whose objectives are to convince the rebels to abandon their armed struggle and rejoin the mainstream of the society, and to eradicate the roots of rebellion by achieving the broad objectives of the alleviation of poverty, the generation of

⁷¹LOI MAMAMAYAN Handbook, General Headquarters AFP, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 1986.

more and productive employment, promotion of social justice and the attainment of sustainable economic growth. The program also pursues a firearm recovery scheme through the provision of financial and material support in exchange of the rebel returnees' firearms/ammunition and explosives.

In 1988, the AFP formulated Letter of Instruction 23/88 - Campaign Plan LAMBAT-BITAG (Operation NET TRAP) to address the growing communist insurgency. This Campaign Plan employed the same strategy as LOI MAMAMAYAN and was envisioned to hasten the counterinsurgency operation against the CPP-NPA for the period from 1989 to 1992 through a sustained, simultaneous and nationally-coordinated general offensive. This employed the strategy against prioritized strategic guerilla fronts geared towards the dismantling of the enemy political infrastructures and the neutralization of the main armed groups of these fronts, thus, gaining strategic control over the CPP-NPA.

In the same period, a para-military unit, the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) was organized throughout the country. As of 1992, this para-military unit has a strength of 73,000 and were employed as village defense. This was an improvement of the notorious CHDF chiefly because of a more strict selection process and each of the 88-man company is led by regular soldiers. Members of the CAFGU were selected from the locality where they are deployed with the local officials having a hand in the selection. Most members are volunteer reservists and were trained by the military in the area.

The main weapon of the AFP in this campaign was the employment of the Army's Special Operations Team (SOT). The primary objectives were the neutralization of the CPP-NPA political infrastructure in the barangay, setting-up counter organizations, organizing grassroots intelligence nets, and organizing the village defense. The concept of the SOT is to reverse the mass organization of the CPP.

The Special Operation Team is composed of a twenty one-man platoon trained in combat operations, intelligence and psychological operations. This team is supported by two other twenty-man platoons as security from insurgent harassment. The concept was to deploy this team to CPP-NPA influenced barangay to break the enemy's organization, deny them from mobilizing the populace and dismantle the entire political machinery of the insurgents in the barangay. Through the use of intelligence, the team identifies and take into custody the members or sympathizers of the CPP-NPA in the targeted barangay. By interrogation or elicitation, the team finds out the other members of the political machinery of the insurgents. Through psychological warfare, the members of the team emphasizes the evils of communism and try to win the support of the barangay populace. The team does not leave the barangay until the political machinery of the insurgent is neutralized and the civil defense is organized. The members of the civil defense comes from volunteers, mostly reservists, from the local populace. The members of the civil defense

serve as the eyes and ears of the military.⁷²

Since the SOT concept was put to operation in 1988, during the launching of LAMBAT BITAG, the AFP had neutralized 26 enemy guerrilla fronts as of 1992.⁷³ Likewise the combat fatality between the AFP troops and the NPA has improved in favor of the government forces as shown in Table 3 (Appendix C).

Major General Alfredo Filler, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the AFP, reported in 1993 that:

The strength of the communists' military wing, the New People's Army, has dropped from a peak of 25,000 in 1987 to a current level of 10,600, of whom about 7,800 are said to be armed with light automatic weapons. The number of barangay, or townships, affected by communist influence has fallen from a peak of 8,500 out of a total of 45,000 to only 1,300 while fronts or base areas are down from 72 to 44. There were a total of 780 armed encounters in the first six months of this year, compared with 2,290 for all 1992. Total insurgency-related deaths last year were 2,121, while up until the end of June this year only 523 had died- including 41 soldiers in a single ambush in northern Mindanao last February. More than 1,120 People's Army regulars surrendered last year, the highest number since the 1986-1987 peace talks. Only halfway through this year, another 1,000 had given themselves up, with entire command structures reportedly surrendering in Eastern Samar.⁷⁴

In order to exploit the initial success of the Armed Forces against the insurgents, the AFP put up the Campaign

⁷²Special Operations Team Manual, Headquarters Philippine Army, Manila, 1989, pp. 3-6.

⁷³Report from the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operation, Philippine Army, 1993.

⁷⁴John McBeth, op. cit., p. 16.

Plan LAMBAT BITAG II in 1991 as a refinement of the previous strategy. The concept of the strategy, was for the AFP, through the Area Commands, to employ the forces, including the Philippine National Police (PNP) as part of total government counterinsurgent force, for COIN. The Integrated National Police was separated from the Armed Forces in 1990 and placed under the Department of Interior and Local Government as mandated by the 1986 Constitution and was renamed Philippine National Police. The forces were employed according to the triad concept of combat operations, intelligence operations and psychological operations of LAMBAT BITAG supplemented by territorial defense operations. The Campaign Plan was:

For simultaneous conduct of combat operations, civil-military operations, intelligence and territorial defensive operations countrywide. Combat operations concentrated on massive operations simultaneously in selected strategic guerrilla fronts aimed at inflicting heavy insurgent losses in men and arms to undermine the enemy's morale and at the same time applying pressure to tire him physically and mentally. Civil-military operations, through psychological warfare, was aimed at destroying the insurgent "will to fight" in order to induce mass surrender and defections and likewise to open the door for peace and reconciliation. Intelligence operations on the other hand was aimed to identify, locate and neutralize the CPP-NPA leadership and to provide timely information to operating units on movements of big guerilla bands and location of their main camps. Territorial defense operations served as the linchpin of the triad operations providing security and stability in both holding and containment areas throughout the country. These operations were the communities' defense against depredations, raids, ambushes and other hostile actions/atrocities and shall deny the enemy territories

and access to resources and the means to fight.⁷⁵

A national election was held in 1992 after the six years term of President Aquino. On his assumption of office, the President of the Philippine, Fidel Ramos legalized the CPP in September 1992 and released the CPP personalities from prison. This gave the members of the CPP the opportunity to participate in competitive elections and other political activities. He also created the National Unification Commission (NUC) to spearhead the dialogue with the insurgents. The peace process initiated by the government is a genuine expression of its sincerity to solve the insurgency problem by peaceful means. The National Unification Commission is an ad hoc advisory body to the President tasked to "formulate and recommend, after consulting with the concerned sectors of society, to the President - a viable general amnesty and peace process that will lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the country. The NUC is guided by the following principles:

1. A national peace program should present a peace vision and process that is community-based, reflecting the sentiments, values and principles important to all Filipinos. Thus, it shall be defined not by the government alone, nor by the different contending armed groups only, but by all Filipinos as one community.
2. A national peace program seeks to forge a new social compact for a just, equitable and humane society.

⁷⁵Campaign Plan LAMBAT BITAG II Handbook, General Headquarters Armed Forces of the Philippines, Quezon City, 1991, pp. 1-2.

3. A national peace program seeks a principled and peaceful resolution of the armed conflicts, with neither blame nor surrender, but dignity for all concerned.

After more than two decades of generally steady growth, from only 95 members in 1968, the CPP-NPA reached its peak strength of 25,200 in 1987. The rising trend has been successfully reversed by 1988, making for the first time in years that the AFP achieved momentum needed to defeat the communist insurgents. There was a steady reduction in the number of CPP-NPA affected villages since 1987 as shown in Table 4 (Appendix D). The same trend was posted in the number of CPP-NPA firearms. Since 1988, the average annual reduction of firearms was placed at ten percent. In 1992, there was a decrease of 6,770 from the peak firearms tally of 15,500 in 1987 as shown in Table 5 (Appendix E).

The AFP's campaign against the insurgents and the peace initiatives of the government had caused the decline in the insurgents manpower, capability and mass support. The return of the democratic process brought about by the overthrow of Marcos and the assumption to the presidency of the popular Corazon Aquino, restored the people's faith in the government. Because of these developments, and most especially the Party's decision to boycott the 1986 elections, the CPP-NPA lost its support from the people.

V. COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORTS EMPLOYED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS

Richard Stubbs in his Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare said:

Each guerrilla war has its own unique characteristics and as a consequence, particular policies and the way in which they are implemented in one arena cannot be necessarily be transferred to another. A number of the themes in this study underscore this argument. The tactics adopted by each side in a guerrilla war must take into consideration the unique circumstances of each society in which such a war is waged. And yet, as the extensive theoretical literature on the principals of waging a guerrilla war suggest, all rural guerrilla wars have some basic features in common.⁷⁶

Along the line that " all rural guerrilla wars have some basic features in common" the author will analyze the Philippine counterinsurgency with the counterinsurgency employed by the selected countries.

A. THE MALAYAN EXPERIENCE

The author chose the Malayan experience for its success in the counterinsurgency program. The Communist party of both countries were established in 1930 and their military components figured in the resistance movement against Japan during W.W. II. Nationalism and deteriorating economic and social conditions are the common issues in their struggle to

⁷⁶Richard Stubbs, Hearts And Minds In Guerrilla Warfare, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1989, p.255.

take over the established government by force of arms. Malaya, however, was still under a colonial ruler, the British, while the Philippines is an independent country when beset by the ongoing insurgency problem. Though it was not a peasant-based insurgency, the Malayan Experience involved rural labor force of the rubber estates and tin mines of the country. In the Philippines and Malaya, the support of the population is and was the key ingredient in the success of a counterinsurgency program.

The origins of the insurrection in Malaya was brought about by the deteriorating economic and social conditions and in the experience of the Malay and the Chinese communities during and after World War II. It was in February 1948 when the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), established in 1930, adopted the strategy of armed struggle against the Malayan Government. It formed the Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPABA) later named Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) as its guerrilla army with the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), which gained popularity as the Resistance Army during the Japanese occupation, forming the core of the organization. In 1949, the MCP organized the Min Yuen or Masses' Organization which provided food, funds, information and recruits.⁷⁷ Racially, the members of the Malay Communist Party and the MPABA were almost entirely Chinese and their

⁷⁷Ibid. p. 87.

base of support was confined to the Chinese community which at that time constituted less than 40 percent of the total population.⁷⁸

Inspired by the success of Mao Tse Tung in China and the widespread dissatisfaction with the Malayan government because of disastrous economic condition prevailing at the time, the MCP decided to pursue an armed struggle to take over the government. In the months of April and May 1948, the MCP initiated violent actions and intimidation on the population to exert pressure against the government. On June 18, 1948, with the increasing violence of the MPABA and after three British planters were killed by the guerrillas, the government declared a State of Emergency for the whole of Malaya and took the measures it could to combat the over 3,000-strong MPABA.⁷⁹ Initially, the government saw the problem as a question of restoring law and order. It employed military and police forces to contain the disorder by coercion and enforcement. The result of these actions was the increase in the number of the guerrillas. As Richard Stubbs stated in his book Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare,: "...the use of coercion and enforcement tactics tend to produce more sympathy

⁷⁸Anthony Short, Communist Insurrection in Malaya, Frederick Muller Limited, London, 1977, pp. 19-21.

⁷⁹Edgar O'Ballance, Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-60, Archon Books, Hamden, Connecticut, 1966, pp. 77-82.

and more recruits for the guerrilla organization...."⁸⁰

The three outstanding causes of victory over the Communists according to Edgar O'Ballance in his Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War were, "aggressive anti-guerrilla tactics, resettlement of sections of the population and the support of the people."⁸¹ Richard Stubbs referred to this as the "hearts and minds" approach to the insurgency which "encompasses political, economic, cultural, social as well as military aspects in the total effort."⁸²

The measure that hit the Malayan Races Liberation Army hardest of all was the resettlement of the Chinese squatter population into the "New Villages" where they could not so easily be contacted and intimidated by the insurgents. This relocation of the segment of the population was called the General Briggs' Plan as it was initiated by General Briggs in 1950 when he was appointed Director of Operations in Malaya. This strategy was adopted and fully implemented when General Templer took over as the High Commissioner of Malaya in 1952. The strategy was to isolate the guerrillas from the source of food and information. The British Government believed that as long as the squatters remained in uncontrolled camps and groups in the edge of the forest, they could be compelled to

⁸⁰Richard Stubbs, op. cit., p. 256.

⁸¹Edgar O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 168-169.

⁸²Richard Stubbs, op. cit., p. 1.

support the insurgents actively. The vital requirement of the insurgents was information and their main source of vital information is the population. To the insurgents, every successful guerrilla movement must rest on an efficient intelligence system, so that there is always advance knowledge of the Government's moves, to enable the guerrillas to take evasive action in time.⁸³ General Briggs' plan completely divorced the MRLA from the people.⁸⁴ Richard Stubbs enumerated some aspects of this strategy as follows:⁸⁵

1. The resettlement centers were developed and most were provided with supplies of clean water, schools, community centers, basic medical care, and some agricultural land.
2. Elections were introduced into the villages which gave the opportunity to govern. Later this was extended to the state and federal level.
3. Increased protection was provided through the establishment of a Home Guard drawn from the local community and the retraining of the members of the police force engaged in the protection of the villages. Training emphasized the need to help Malaysians rather than abuse them.
4. Strict control on all foodstuffs and others essential supplies were introduced in selected areas as a means of depriving guerrillas of vital supplies.
5. Severe penalties continued to be imposed on those caught, or suspected of, aiding the communist organizations. These penalties varied from lengthy curfews for uncooperative villages to detention, life imprisonment, and even the death penalty.

⁸³Edgar O'Ballance, op cit., pp. 106-110.

⁸⁴Ibid. p. 106.

⁸⁵Richard Stubbs, op. cit., p. 250-251.

6. Major propaganda offensive was mounted.

The best anti-guerrilla tactic as stated by Edgar O'Ballance, "is to get into the jungle after the guerillas, and to make it unsafe for them to be there at all." At the start of the conflict, the Malayan Government perceived the guerrilla threat as a force challenging the law and order in the country and employed the "Ferret Force" which consisted of British, Malay and Gurkha soldiers especially trained in jungle warfare. The aggressive hunter attitude of the Government troops, combined with a mastery of the jungle, took freedom of the countryside away from the guerrillas. Accordingly, the initiative was wrested from them to a large extent.⁸⁶

The resettlement of the Chinese squatters was complemented by a psychological campaign. This was aimed at persuading the people that democracy is right and Communism is wrong was a vital ingredient for winning the insurgency.⁸⁷ The campaign included the use of pamphlets, "voice" aircraft, safe conduct passes, the questionnaire, rewards, pardons and collective punishment.

Pamphlets by the million were dropped from aircraft and distributed by hand to such good effect that the MRLA had eventually to inflict the death penalty on any member caught

⁸⁶Edgar O'Ballance, op. cit., pp. 86-88 & 169

⁸⁷Richard Stubbs, op. cit., pp.122-124.

reading or discussing the contents, The pamphlets gave information on how to surrender, Government intentions, MCP misfortunes, how the war was going on and what was happening in the country and abroad. As Edgar O'Ballance stated, "To insurgents long cut off from the outside world in their jungle hideouts, they (pamphlets) must have made very attractive reading indeed. The one drawback was that many of the insurgents were illiterate."⁸⁸

The use of "voice" aircraft was an improvement upon, and supplemented, pamphlets, as it affected all, literate and illiterate alike. The insurgent leaders found no way of nullifying it. Captured or surrendered Communists were often taken up in the aircraft to "speak" to their former comrades and to urge them to surrender. The success of this form of psychological warfare was so great that some 70 percent of the surrendered insurgents said that they were influenced to some degree by the "voice" in the aircraft.⁸⁹ Likewise, safe conduct passes were dropped from aircraft and distributed in large numbers, guaranteeing good treatment and medical care on surrender. Edgar O'Ballance stated that, "they became so effective that no member of the MRLA was ever trusted to be completely alone, and eventually sentries had to be posted to watch sentries, lest they slip away and made use of a safe

⁸⁸Ibid. p. 173.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 174.

conduct pass."⁹⁰

One important factor that helped the government in its fight against the insurgents was the improvement of the economy. The boom in its economy caused by the rising demand for rubber and tin during the Korean War, gave the Government respite. The boom produced full employment , high wages, and a doubling of the Government's revenue which sustained the resettlement program.⁹¹

The Emergency was over in 1960 after Malaya got its independence from the British in 1957. The government's strategy prevailed. The guerrillas became more vulnerable as they were forced to take risks in order to search out food and other supplies and as their number was reduced, there was no one to replace them. The guerrilla insurrection in Malaya, which has dragged on for twelve years, had ended in a Communist defeat. In all, the insurgents probably had some 12,000 fighters, men and women, pass through the ranks of the MRLA (and the MPABA) during the period of Emergency as a whole. Of these 10,699 had been accounted for by the Security Forces, including 6,710 killed, 1,287 captured and 2,702 surrendered. About 500 remained, which meant that about 1,000 must have died, deserted or been liquidated. The majority of

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 173.

⁹¹Richard Stubbs, op. cit., pp. 107-114 and 249.

the killed fell to British and Gurkha units.⁹²

B. EL SALVADOR

I opted to consider the counterinsurgency approach of El Salvador for its similar contextual problems with the Philippines. Samuel Huntington identified these contextual problems as: major insurgencies, extreme poverty and severe socio-economic inequality. Huntington further stated that:

Many argued that the new democracies facing severe contextual problems have to cope successfully with those problems in order to develop the legitimacy essential to the consolidation of democracy. This general proposition has been reinforced by arguments that the failure to solve the country's most serious problem--be it debt, poverty, inflation, or insurgency--would mean the end of democracy in that country.⁹³

El Salvador has suffered from insurgent struggles since the early 1930s and was in the midst of civil war from 1980 until the end of 1991 when the ceasefire was signed between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN. During those years of conflict, the combatants comprised government forces backed by the United States and leftist guerillas guided by several radical parties under varying degrees of Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Soviet influence. During the leftist guerillas were grouped into five factions, each with its own political and military wings:

⁹²Edgar O'Ballance, op. cit., p. 164.

⁹³Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, pp. 253-255.

1. Salvadoran Revolutionary Party (PRS) and its military wing, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP).
2. Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES) and its military wing, the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL).
3. National Resistance (RN) and its military wing, the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN).
4. Forces of Popular Liberation (FPL) and its military wing, the Armed Forces of Popular Liberation (FAPL).
5. Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America (PRTC) and its military wing, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Popular Liberation (FARLP)

In 1980, the major guerilla groups were unified under the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).⁹⁴

For over century, land ownership and power have been vested in a small oligarchy, back by repressive military forces and vigilante squads. The country has the distinction of having the oldest continuous sequence of military rule in Latin America. The army has governed directly since 1931 up to 1984 when Jose Napoleon Duarte won the presidential election.⁹⁵ As Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh in El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited said, "For over a century, Salvadorans had endured almost ceaseless military rule at the behest of the country's small, landed elite, the

⁹⁴Andrew Hoehn and Carlos Weiss, Overview of Latin American Insurgencies in Latin American Insurgencies, edited by Georges Fauriol, NDU press, Georgetown University Center for Strategic & international Studies and The National Defense University, 1985, p. 31.

⁹⁵Liza North, Bitter Grounds: Book of Revolt in El Salvador, Lawrence Hill, Connecticut, 1985, p. 9.

so-called 'fourteen families' who dominated El Salvador's underdeveloped agricultural economy."⁹⁶ The authors continued on to say:

A peasant uprising in January 1932, led by Communist Party leader Agustin Farabundo Marti, in the coffee producing areas of western and central highlands, was crushed when government forces massacred approximately thirty thousand Salvadorans in three weeks - an infamous episode known as la matanza (the massacre)."⁹⁷

This repression caused so much fear in the area that the people refrained from wearing their native costume in order not to be reminded of the incident.

Since the 1930s the oligarchy enlisted the army to protect their economic interests and the oligarchy had helped the military officers to use government to line their own pockets as managers and directors of many semi-autonomous state agencies such as the Central Reserve Bank, the Salvadoran Security Institute, the national airline and the census bureau.⁹⁸

The counterinsurgency in El Salvador is a United States' sponsored operation. Following the October 15, 1979 coup, in which General Humberto Romero was ousted as the last protector of the interests of the oligarchy, US began modernizing the

⁹⁶Daniel Siegel and Joy Hackel, "El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited," Low-Intensity Conflict, edited by Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh, Pantheon Books, N.Y., 1988, p. 113.

⁹⁷Ibid. p. 113.

⁹⁸Richard Nuccio, What's Wrong, Who's Right in Central America, Facts on File Publication, New York, 1986, p. 49.

Salvadoran armed forces to contain, control and crush the insurgents. According to Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh in Low-Intensity Warfare the United States military strategy emphasized three distinct elements:

Retrain the Salvadoran military into a powerful counterinsurgency force capable of defeating the armed/political revolutionary alliance known as the FDR-FMLN (Revolutionary Democratic Front and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front); implement "hearts and minds" programs to win civilian support along with the move to underwrite the Salvadoran economy; and thirdly, to replace formal military rule with a 'third force' civilian government that is supported by the populace.⁹⁹

Training the Salvadoran military to fight a counterinsurgency war has been a major activity for the US government. In 1982, the United States military assistance helped transform the Salvadoran military into an unconventional force that was more capable in fighting the insurgents. The military adopted more aggressive actions using small, air mobile combat units. These moves turned the war in favor of the Army but subsequent adjustments made by the FMLN frustrated the government forces. As Klare and Kornbluh said, "The insurgents adapted easily to the situation by breaking down columns of one hundred to three hundred fighters into small eight to twelve person units."¹⁰⁰ As a result there was a stalemate in the conflict.

In 1986 the Salvadoran Armed Forces introduced a second

⁹⁹Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh, op. cit, p. 113-114.

¹⁰⁰Ibid. p. 118.

United States financed pacification plan known as the "Counterinsurgency Campaign: United for Reconstruction" (UFR). The strategy is to win over the minds and will of the population. In addition to giving the military control over the reconstruction programs nationwide, it contained a public relations element that gave the military the potential to build a popular support base of its own. As Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh stated:

UFR sought to incorporate every sector of Salvadoran society--private enterprise, the church, labor unions, civilians and government ministries--in one pacification effort with the following specific goals:

1. To win the hearts and minds of the civilian population in order to mobilize its support for UFR and unite diverse sectors of the society to develop a solution to the crisis.
2. To create an atmosphere of peace and security for the people and protect their well-being in target regions with the goal of beginning a balanced development of the social, political, and economic sectors of society.
3. To destroy the tactical forces of the terrorist in selected regions and neutralize their zones of operations.
4. To isolate subversives politically, physically, and psychologically, neutralizing their influence over the civilian population.
5. To satisfy the aspirations of the civilian populace in selected areas.
6. To incrementally consolidate peace in the country.
7. [And] to fortify and consolidate the democratic process at a national level.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 121.

FMLN fortunes on the battlefield began to wane in the later half of the 1980s when US assistance to El Salvador improved the effectiveness of the military. At the same time, the evolution of democratic institutions enhanced the government's credibility among Salvadorans and began to undercut the insurgent's political appeal. President Alfredo Cristiani won the presidential election in March 1989. The FMLN's all-out offensive in November 1989, the largest military operation to date, strained the insurgents' military and logistic capabilities, failing to overthrow the government in the process.¹⁰²

Peace negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations was started in May 1990. The peace talks actually began in 1984 when the Salvadoran government agreed to negotiate with the leftist revolutionary movement. The Communist decline in Europe and the failure of the elaborately planned offensives in 1989 apparently convinced the FMLN leaders to negotiate with the government. It was not until the election of President Alfredo Cristiani that the government seriously accommodated the growing calls for peace talks from other Central American countries and the United Nations. It was conceded, however that pressures from the US, its principal supporter, and the UN persuaded El Salvador to agree to sit down and talk peace with the FMLN.

¹⁰²Clifford Krauss, Inside Central America, Summit Books N.Y., 1991, p. 103.

In the event that peace holds, El Salvador can begin immediate reconstruction processes of the country's infrastructure ruined during the civil war. On what El Salvador does with what follows depends on real peace and the country's future.

C. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The apparent success of the Malayan counterinsurgency operations had been attributed to the isolation of the insurgents who were mostly of Chinese descent from the rest of the populace, the limiting of the area of conflict to the jungles of the country, effective psychological operations, the competence of the military forces in jungle operations as compared to the insurgents and the improvement in the economic situation of the country.

In part, the Philippines had employed with minimal success the methods used by Malaya in fighting the insurgents. Isolating the insurgents from the rest of the populace is a bit difficult in the Philippine setting because most of the rebels operating in a certain area are indigenous to the locality. Unlike the Malayan insurgents who could easily be distinguished because of their racial features, the Filipino rebels would not be easily distinguished by their physical features. Cantonment of the population in influenced and affected barrios had been conducted by the Philippine Armed Forces to deny the rebels the sanctuary of the rural barrios

but this was discontinued because of the pressure from cause oriented groups and the unpopularity of the action to the civilian populace. Because also of the sad state of the country's economy, the government cannot provide the necessary livelihood program for the displaced populace.

Filipino rebels usually operate in the locality in which they grew up so that their knowledge of the terrain is far superior to that of government military forces tasked to go after them. While the Malayan military forces engaged the dissidents mostly in the jungles, Philippine security forces has to engage the enemy not only in the rural but also in the urban areas. While the Malayan security forces were able to neutralize the intelligence gathering capability of the Malayan dissidents, the Philippine military forces experienced difficulty neutralizing the intelligence network of the rebels. The continued deterioration in the economic situation of the Philippines has not given the country the needed shot in the arm to resolve the insurgency problem unlike Malaya whose economy improved as it winded up its insurgency problem.

The insurgency movement in El Salvador had its roots on the inequities in wealth and land distribution among the populace just like in the Philippines. The armed forces had been used in both countries to perpetuate the power and the wealth of the rich. The excessive use of military force had been resorted to resolve the insurgency problem, hurting the civilian populace more than the dissidents. Instead of a

reduction in the number of dissidents, their number increased because of atrocities committed by military forces.

From the experience of El Salvador and the Philippines, noticeable is the gradual shift in the strategy to resolve the insurgency problem from the purely military solution to a politico-economic-military solution to the problem. What has happened in El Salvador where a peace process has been considered in settling differences between warring sides, is the initiative being implemented in the Philippines. The repeal of the Anti- Subversion Law by President Ramos is paving the way for the CPP-NPA to participate in the legitimate political process to obtain reforms.

What was present in the Malayan solution to the insurgency problem which was not very evident in the El Salvador and Philippine experience is the great improvement in the economic situation of the country as it tried to resolve the insurgency problem. Economic well-being has been the reason for most insurgency situations in developing countries and it is only through economic prosperity and the equitable distribution of the benefits that the insurgency problem could finally be resolved.

VI. CONCLUSION

Among the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines is the last country beset by the communist insurgency. For 25 years, the fight against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) has extracted so much blood from the Filipino people and caused great burden on the country's economy.

The growth of the communist insurgency in the Philippines traces back to the pre-conditions that had been in existence since the Spanish colonial period. The ownership of land, limited only to the few landed elites, tracing its roots to the encomienda system established by the Spaniards was a major cause of the imbalance in wealth distribution leaving a major portion of the populace in an impoverished state. This system was perpetuated up to the present by the heirs of the old encomenderos.

It was under the American regime that peasants and labor unions appeared. The Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) which was established by Evangelista in 1930 is the forerunner of the present Communist Party. The Hukbalahap, the military arm of the PKP formed in 1942, was an effective anti-Japanese resistance army during the Second World War. The Americans, however, disarmed the Hukbalahaps after the liberation because

of their communist influence. This angered the Huks and coupled with the economic difficulties and mounting repression at that time, fought against the government. The appointment of Magsaysay as Secretary of Defense brought the rebellion to an end. During his incumbency, Magsaysay instituted reforms and promises of reforms that satisfied the grievances of the people especially the peasants and the Huks.

The CPP formed by Sison was a formidable political organization which has its roots deeply seated and widely spread in the population. It has successfully transformed the poorer segment of the population into a social movement against the government. The course which it espouses has political, economic and social characteristics which appealed strongly to a significant number of people. On the other hand, the government has an existing political/administrative machinery which has the resources for controlling the population and defeating the enemy. The process of formulating the right approach to solve the insurgency, however, is still the goal being sought by the Filipinos.

Under the Marcos regime, repressive military and police operations were periodically launched against the insurgents. The repressive nature of the counterinsurgency operations hurt the civilian populace more than the insurgents causing an alienation of the poor, and swelling of the ranks of the insurgents. The presence of the U.S. bases in the country since 1946, the date when the Philippines got back its

independence, was an issue that the insurgents had successfully exploited among the intellectuals and the students. During the declaration of Martial Law, several decrees were issued to penalize communist insurgents. Social, economic and political programs introduced to rid the country of the problems breeding insurgency, lacked the political will to follow through the programs to the end objective. The downturn in the economic condition of the country in the 1970s and 1980s made the realization of the programs more difficult to attain. The Philippine situation is in contrast to the Malayan experience. The success of the Malayan Emergency was aided by the boom in the economy brought about by the Korean War. The Malayan government was able to proceed with and finance its counterinsurgency operations that resulted to the defeat of the insurgents.

The Marcos government employed a strategy of security and development to counter the growing insurgency. The strategy was a good one but it was not implemented properly. Marcos concentrated on protecting his power and did not implement the structural reforms that the strategy called for.

The Aquino government likewise offered reconciliation amnesty and rehabilitation to the insurgents and instituted reform to strengthen the image of the government before the people. But the basic strategy was similar to what Marcos has offered. The government also introduced development programs to alleviate the poverty of the people.

It was during the Aquino regime that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) implemented the OPLAN LAMBAT BITAG which encompasses the employment of psychological, intelligence and combat operations against the insurgents. The experience of the Philippine military has proven that military action alone cannot solve the communist insurgency problem. The government realized that the support of the people is and always be a crucial element to the counterinsurgency effort. Involving the population in the security of their barangays through the Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) gave the citizenry the sense of involvement in the counterinsurgency effort of the government. Malayan experience clearly demonstrated that the support of the people was contributory to the solution of the insurgency problem. On the other hand, the failure of the governments of El Salvador and the Philippines to win over the support of the people because of repressive measures was a factor in the continued existence of the insurgency problem.

The rift among CPP-NPA leaders has taken its toll on the insurgency movement, particularly in terms of the decline in manpower, capability and mass support. The current bitter internal struggle and the loss of faith of many party cadres in socialism caused by the disintegration of Socialist Europe and the crumbling of the former Soviet Union hastened the decline of the insurgency movement. Likewise, the peace initiatives of the government contributed to the problems of

the leadership of the insurgents in maintaining their control of the movement.

While the CPP-NPA is the most potent threat to the security of the Republic of the Philippines, it has not attained the position to win militarily against the AFP. In like manner, the AFP could not totally defeat the insurgents for as long as the basic issues that attract or draw the people to join the insurgency movement are not addressed by the government. Resolve on the part of the government to implement a comprehensive agrarian reform program and a more equitable income distribution would be addressing the root causes of the insurgency problem.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1: ESTIMATE OF CPP-NPA STRENGTH (1968-1992)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>
1968	95	1981	5,943
1969	155	1982	6,400
1970	650	1983	7,000
1971	1,100	1984	12,000
1972	1,320	1985	16,200
1973	1,900	1986	24,430
1974	1,800	1987	25,200
1975	1,800	1988	23,060
1976	1,800	1989	18,640
1977	1,200	1990	17,270
1978	2,300	1991	14,800
1979	2,760	1992	11,920
1980	4,900		

Source: Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Philippine Army (1993).

APPENDIX B

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF GUERRILLA FRONTS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FRONTS</u>
1981	26
1982	40
1983	42
1984	45
1985	46
1986	64
1987	72
1988	60
1989	56
1990	57
1991	47
1992	41

Source: Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Philippine Army (1993)

APPENDIX C

TABLE 3: COMBAT SCOREBOARD (1984-1992)

YEAR	GOVERNMENT TROOPS KILLED	NPA KILLED	FIREARMS GAINED	FIREARMS LOST
1984	204	266	179	274
1985	221	825	856	285
1986	520	747	575	672
1987	503	843	807	431
1988	468	1,347	1,264	363
1989	479	1,441	1,274	533
1990	508	1,198	1,248	672
1991	507	1,183	939	272
1992	431	966	573	225

Source: Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Philippine
Army (1993).

APPENDIX D

TABLE 4: ESTIMATE OF DISSIDENT AFFECTED VILLAGES (1985-1992)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DISSIDENT AFFECTED VILLAGES</u>
1985	7,019
1986	8,496
1987	8,059
1988	7,852
1989	6,539
1990	4,841
1991	3,625
1992	2,039

Source: Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Philippine Army (1992).

APPENDIX E

TABLE 5: ESTIMATE ON THE NUMBER OF NPA FIREARMS (1985-1992)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF NPA FIREARMS</u>
1985	11,250
1986	12,120
1987	15,500
1988	12,260
1989	12,060
1990	11,700
1991	10,510
1992	8,730

Source: Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Philippine Army (1993).

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